Your EAP resiliency toolkit

How to talk to employees about stress and work-life balance
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Welcome!

Thanks for your interest in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)! As a manager, you know that happy employees are more productive employees. But stress — physical, mental and emotional wear and tear — can affect your team’s motivation and morale.

This meeting guide gives you the resources to address stress and work-life balance — and show your employees you care about their well-being.

Getting ready for your meeting

Read all the information and flyers linked in this guide. You’ll want to know about the resources available to your employees, so you can share them. You’ll also need to decide which flyers you’d like to print and hand out during your meeting.

If you haven’t used the EAP website, log on and explore (go to anthemEAP.com and use the login SISC). Take a skill builder, check out the Life Events kits or learn about myStrength. You should be able to explain the site’s features to make employees feel comfortable using them.

Think it through. How will you bring up some potentially emotional subjects? What are your goals? How will you keep employees engaged?

Know your facts. Employees will appreciate that you took the time to research and think about the concerns you’re raising. Here’s a helpful guide to get you ready:

- **5 Things You Should Know About Stress**

Don’t make promises you can’t keep. Instead, you want to focus on what you have the power to control and improve on. This will help employees have realistic expectations.

Find the right time. The last thing you want to do is add to your employees’ stress levels. Schedule your meeting when workloads aren’t too heavy and it’s not disruptive to your team.

Before you start a discussion, you’ll need to decide how comfortable you feel leading it. Remember, your Human Resources (HR) department and EAP are here to help.

You can explore various topics in one meeting or spread them out over several team meetings (this usually works better). Once you cover a topic, be sure to reinforce the message to your employees throughout the year.

Let employees know about the EAP website at anthemEAP.com (login: SISC), where they can access a library of articles and other materials about finding balance.

Depending on your needs, you can also set up an EAP seminar or webinar for your team. To learn more, see the “Resources” section of this guide.
**Meeting with your team**

You know your team members and how they like to communicate best. So you probably have a plan for starting this conversation. Just be yourself and consider these tips:

- Take a deep breath before you start.
- Listen to what your employees are saying — really listen.
- Use a gentle tone.
- Con’t judge, talk at or ignore others.
- Be supportive and kind.

You can open the dialogue with: “Today, I’d like to spend some time talking about managing stress and work-life balance. I, like you, want to know what I can do to find balance. I’ve done some research and discovered our EAP has a number of resources to help us cope with stress. I’d like to share these. Did you know we have an EAP?”

If any employees aren’t aware of the EAP, direct them to anthemEAP.com for more information. You could show them the Balancing work and family life flyer and encourage employees to check out the other flyers.

You’ll also want to let them know about EAP’s 16 Life Event kits — all available at no cost. Some of the most popular titles include Creating Greater Balance, Managing Home and Family Life and Stress Management. You can find the kits at anthemEAP.com (login: SISC).

Plus, your EAP offers myStrength, a free online and on-the-go mobile resource for managing stress, anxiety, depression and other emotional health issues.

Do you have questions about this meeting guide, EAP services or free EAP seminars/webinars? Email your EAP account manager, Kevin Robertson, at kevin.robertson@anthem.com.

**You can make a difference**

To succeed as a workplace leader, you need to be organized, open and honest with your employees.¹ You also need to foster a culture that motivates them in positive, low-stress ways. You can do this by:²

- Acting respectfully and responsibly.
- Managing feelings, having integrity, and being consistent and calm in dealing with others.
- Handling problems quickly and fairly.
- Making yourself available to talk one-on-one.
- Being friendly and relaxed, and using humor.
- Giving clear direction, while empowering employees to be independent and take risks.

**Developing these skills takes time, experience and commitment.** If you feel like you may be more competent in some areas than others, you’re not alone. The key is to continue to work on your areas of weakness and improve your ability to communicate with employees.

**Bottom line: You can make an impact!**

If work-life balance and stress management are challenges for your employees, you might want to offer an Anthem EAP health and wellness seminar. These seminars, which are offered at no cost to you or your team, include:

- A personal guide to managing stress and change
- Facilitating effective meetings
- Lightening your life with laughter
- Managing priorities to maximize your day
- Mindful meditation
- Preventing burnout
- Stress management: building resiliency
- The Five Buckets Principle: balancing work & life
- The path to inner peace

To set up an on-site seminar or a webinar, email your EAP account manager, Kevin Robertson, at kevin.robertson@anthem.com.

The EAP website offers managers access to a library of leadership articles, such as:

- “Managing Employee Stress”
- “Stress in the Workplace”
- “What is Employee Burnout?”

Managers can also take advantage of myStrength to promote emotional health and wellness with:

- Positivity-training tools.
- Inspirational videos, articles and quotes.
- A daily mood tracker.
- Step-by-step eLearning programs.

To use the EAP website, go to anthemEAP.com and enter SISC.
Managing employees’ stress

Stress is a health risk and serious problem in the workplace. Employee stress can take many forms and have a big impact on both people and groups. It can result in worry, anger, dependency, withdrawal and depression. It can also cause:

- Lower productivity.
- Missed work days.
- Burnout and high turnover.
- Increased medical and health insurance costs.
- Stress-related compensation claims.

Deal with the causes of stress

It’s vital to treat workplace stress like any other work-related health hazard. You can’t just go over the signs. You have to identify causes — like heavy workloads, organizational changes or lack of employee control — before you can address prevention and management.

To figure out the main causes for your team, ask them. Establish an open line of communication, so employees know they can come to you when work gets too stressful.

Once you know the root causes, you can think about solutions.

- When possible, review and work to change policies, procedures and practices that undermine employees’ personal power, sense of control or motivation.
- Involve employees in setting goals, making choices and solving problems.
- Use new cultural and communication styles that encourage openness and transparency.
- Make sure employees are clear about your expectations and their performance goals.
- Update employees whenever there are important organizational changes, so they understand the impact of those changes on their jobs.
- Give employees the resources they need to be successful.
- Keep employees’ work environment safe and comfortable.
- Discourage employees from working during their sick days and vacation time. If they’re concerned about project coverage, come up with a better backup system. Assure them they won’t be penalized for taking time off.

You can help employees cope with stress by:

- Offering training programs that teach relaxation techniques, time management skills and the power of positive thinking.
- Providing on-site break spaces.
- Allowing flexible work schedules and telecommuting options.
- Supporting workplace health initiatives and outreach.
- Engaging employees to problem-solve with you. They have the best perspective about what’s stressing them out and can bring meaningful ideas to the table.

Know the signs of acute stress

When ignored, stress can lead to apathy, feelings of hopelessness, depression and substance abuse problems. If you think an someone may have acute stress, call HR for help.

While you can’t eliminate all stressors, we hope this guide helps you build a collection of stress prevention and management tools for your employees and organization.

How did your meeting go?

Congratulations! You’ve taken the first step to helping your employees better handle stress — and that’s no small feat.

Going forward, you’ll want to watch your team’s stress levels and offer ongoing resources. You can use the flyers included in the “Resources” section and share them throughout the year. This will let your employees know you’re serious about improving their quality of life.

Be sure to keep the conversation going. If issues come up and you need support, reach out to HR or your EAP.

Would you please share your feedback on this meeting guide? We want to know what you think of the content, how your employees responded to it, and what topics you’d like to see added or revised.

Contact your account manager or use this link to fill out a brief survey.

Questions? Looking for lots of hard copies to pass out? We’re happy to help.

Contact Kevin Robertson at kevin.robertson@anthem.com.
Resources
Below are links to some great resources you can print and share with your employees.

- **Balancing work and family life**: a guide to our EAP resources for managing stress and finding a better work-life balance
- **EAP work/life services**: an overview of services to help employees with work-life balance; highlights the EAP website
- **Finding the right balance**: tips to help your employees balance work and life priorities
- **Mind over matter**: guidance for overcoming stress through self-awareness
- **Take a break**: tips and tools for stress relief
- **myStrength**: a summary of this no-cost “health club for the mind”
## Balancing work and family life

Your personal resources from Anthem’s EAP

Anthem’s EAP can help you strike a balance. Here’s how:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>How it can help you</th>
<th>Get started</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work/life services</td>
<td>Get help juggling work, life and caregiving with services like:</td>
<td>Sign up at anthemEAP.com (Member login: SISC) or call 800-999-7222.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Child care</td>
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<td>- In-home elder care</td>
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<td>- Pet sitting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Moving, relocation and much more</td>
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<tr>
<td>e-Learning skill builders</td>
<td>Learn about various work-life topics, including:</td>
<td>Go to anthemEAP.com (Member login: SISC)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Maximizing Your Day: Effective Time Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Self-Care: Remaining Resilient</td>
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<td>- Caring for Aging Relatives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These online courses are usually just 30- to 45-minutes long and can be repeated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>How it can help you</td>
<td>Get started</td>
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<td>The WellPost blog</td>
<td>Gain expert advice on a wide range of health and wellness topics, such as how to manage stress and find balance in your life.</td>
<td>Read the WellPost blog on anthemEAP.com (Member login: SISC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthem EAP on Twitter</td>
<td>Stay current on the latest health and work-life balance tips.</td>
<td>Follow us on Twitter at @AnthemEAP.</td>
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| Health and wellness seminars  | Access a library of recorded seminars on topics like: *Building Resiliency*  
* Coping with Change  
* Information Overload  
New seminars are added monthly to the EAP website.                                                                                                            | To see current and upcoming topics, go to anthemEAP.com (Member login: SISC) and select Online Seminars. |
| CareFamily in-home care providers | Find, hire and manage in-home care providers for aging loved ones. You choose which caregivers are hired, set up a schedule, and handle their duties and payment.                                                | Go to anthemEAP.com (Member login: SISC) and get a discount on the premium membership.                |
| EAP counseling                | Get six counseling visits per issue each year — at no cost to you. These services are confidential, so no one will know you used them unless we have your permission in writing.*                                                                 | Call 800-999-7222 for a counseling referral.                                                          |
| *State and federal laws apply. For program limitations and exclusions, contact your EAP's toll-free number.                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                       |
| Life Event kits               | Manage stress and different life events with kits like: *Creating Greater Balance*  
* Managing Home and Family Life  
* Stress Management  
There are 16 information-packed kits — and they’re all free.                                                                                                                     | Kits are available on anthemEAP.com (Member login: SISC)                                               |
| myStrength online and mobile tools | Find on-the-go support for stress, depression, anxiety and substance abuse with: * Inspirational videos, articles and quotes.  
* Exercises for developing personal action plans and making healthy changes.  
* Learning modules.  
* Mood trackers that let you see your progress.                                                                                                                                     | Sign up at anthemEAP.com (Member login: SISC)                                                        |
Saying that life is hectic is an understatement. When you toss in everyday challenges that we all face from time to time, be it work, home or something very personal, it’s not always easy to handle everything on your own. In fact, sometimes it makes sense to reach out for help. And since many people just don’t have the time, your employer offers a wonderful resource to help with all kinds of things — from simple to serious.

First stop — the EAP website — your 24/7 resource
Just go to anthemEAP.com for articles, educational materials, tips, tools and more. You can search for information on a variety of topics including:

- Balancing your personal life and work
- Grief and loss support
- Becoming a new parent
- Men’s and women’s health for all ages
- Moving or buying a home; working and living abroad
- Elder care, child care and adoption
- Pet services such as sitters, boarding and day care
- Access to legal and financial resources
- Tips to live life to the fullest from our WellPost blog
- Monthly seminars on living healthier

There’s no need to sign up — you and your household members are automatically enrolled.

We understand how important privacy is when it comes to certain subjects. So rest assured that your friends, family and employer can’t find out about your use of EAP services, unless you give your written permission. *

Sometimes talking to someone one-to-one makes all the difference
You can speak with a work and life specialist by calling 800-999-7222, day or night. Your specialist will listen to your needs, research solutions and provide tailored resources in a helpful packet of information. If you prefer chatting live online go to anthemEAP.com to use LiveCONNECT instant messaging to speak with a member of our team.

* In accordance with federal and state law, and professional ethical standards.

This document is for general informational purposes. Check with your employer for specific information on the services available to you.

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Finding the right balance
Get the most out of life — at home and work

Ever feel like there aren’t enough hours in the day? When life gets this busy, use the helpful tips below to keep your health and happiness top priorities.

Tips for finding work-life balance

**Take a look at your current situation.** Ask yourself: “How am I really feeling?” “Am I appreciated?” “Could I use some support?” Your answers to these and other questions can help guide you in making a work-life balance plan.

**Identify sources of stress.** To fight stress, you need to know where it’s coming from and where to turn. Take the next step by calling your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 800-999-7222 or visit anthemEAP.com and enter SISC to log in.

**Use time management techniques.** Learn to manage time so it doesn’t manage you. Begin by tracking a few days to see how you spend your hours, where you could be more efficient and go from there.

**Ask for help and delegate.** Letting go can feel scary, but it’s an important skill to have. You can’t do it all, so practice team work and trusting others. Build on small tasks and learn to confidently share responsibilities.

**Learn to let go of guilt.** Needing help or having to change plans doesn’t mean you’re letting yourself or anyone else down. Life constantly throws you curve balls and it’s okay to adjust your game. When you do, just regroup and think positively.

**Prioritize your values.** Your values evolve with time. Think about what’s important to you now and how this affects the people in your life. Do you need to make changes in your work or personal relationships to match where you’re at?

**Practice mindfulness.** Mindfulness is a mental state where you practice being in the “here and now.” Changing your focus makes it less likely that you’ll be stressed out about the future or stuck in the past. This allows you to respond better to stressors, and nurture your needs and relationships.
Manage your workload. Monitor your tasks, make sure you can take on new projects and check with your manager to keep your schedule balanced.

Dedicate time for yourself each day. We all need some alone time. If you have an hour, that's great. If you can only spare 15 minutes, that'll work too. Remember, you'll be more effective if you take care of yourself first. Use this time to recharge your batteries and do what you want.

Exercise and relax. Exercise not only helps your physical health, but can also improve your emotional well-being and lower stress. A little down time can go a long way. Can't seem to relax? Your EAP can guide you in the right direction.

Get a good night's rest. A lack of sleep can leave you feeling spent, unfocused and irritable. Make time for 7 to 9 hours of shuteye each night.

Give it your best effort. If you’re feeling out of control and unhappy, it’s time for change – big or small. Maybe you need to eat healthier, end a one-sided friendship or show more leadership at work? Don’t wait for life to make things right. Take the reins.

Still need help figuring it all out?
Call your Employee Assistance Program today at 800-999-7222 or visit anthemEAP.com and enter SISC to log in.
Mind over matter
Combatting stress through self-awareness

In today’s world, stress is likely to be a part of your life. The key is learning how to identify and manage it. Mindfulness is one proven strategy for controlling stress before it controls you.¹

What are the warning signs of stress?²
- Headaches, muscle tension, neck or back pain
- Upset stomach
- Dry mouth
- Chest pains or rapid heartbeat
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite or overeating “comfort foods”
- Increased frequency of colds
- Lack of concentration or memory problems
- Anxiety, irritability or short temper

Grab a mobile device and breathe deeply

If you have a smartphone or mobile device, there are a number of free apps that can help you be more mindful.

Search *mindfulness* in your app store.
Ways to reduce stress

Guided imagery: relaxation aided by imagination

Guided imagery uses words and music to help guide you toward a relaxed, peaceful state. You might imagine yourself on a beautiful beach or country road. An instructor, tapes or scripts can help you through this process.³

Deep breathing: one of the best ways to lower stress in the body

When you take slow, deep breaths, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then passes that message along to your body, lowering your heart rate and blood pressure.⁴

Mindfulness: a focus on the here and now

Mindfulness is a mental state where you’re focused on the present and what you’re feeling in the moment. With your attention on the here and now, you’re less likely to get stuck in worries about the future or past regrets.

Mindfulness is often learned through meditation, which is a method of controlling your thoughts by focusing on your breathing, a phrase or an image. The key to mindfulness is allowing those thoughts to come and go without judging them.¹

How to practice mindful meditation

Most mindful meditation is done seated. Try to relax your body. To do this:⁵

1. Sit up straight in a chair with both feet on the floor and your hands on your thighs.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Pay attention to your breath as you inhale and exhale.
4. Focus on your forehead, the bridge of your nose, your cheeks and so on — until you reach your toes.
5. As you “travel” down your body, concentrate only on the sensations of each part and let all other thoughts go.

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Take a break

Between work and family, your days are wall-to-wall responsibilities. You feel more pressure than ever, and that affects your emotional and physical health.

What can you do about it? Take a break. Whether it’s five minutes of meditation or a lunchtime stroll, a little downtime can go a long way toward relieving stress and helping you recharge.

You’ve got this! Here are ways to take a break from stress:

**Be present**
Slow down. Be mindful. Focus on one activity for a few minutes. If it’s walking, how does it sound when your feet hit the ground? Feel your muscles with each step.

**Decompress**
Place a warm heat wrap around your neck and shoulders for 10 minutes. Close your eyes and relax your face, neck, upper chest and back muscles.

**Laugh out loud**
A good belly laugh lowers cortisol, your body’s stress hormone, and boosts endorphins, which help your mood. So lighten up with a funny podcast, video or whatever gets you smiling.

**Crank up the tunes**
Research shows that listening to soothing music can lower your blood pressure, heart rate and anxiety. Create a playlist of songs and sounds that make you feel good.

**Meditate**
Just a few minutes of meditation can help relieve anxiety and stress. You can start by:

- Sitting up straight with both feet on the floor.
- Closing your eyes.
- In the moment, note how you’re feeling physically and emotionally. Pay attention to your thoughts without judging them.

**Get moving**
All forms of exercise release feel-good chemicals in your brain that can help ease depression and anxiety.

**Reach out**
Communicating and connecting with others can help you feel good. Share what’s on your mind.

**Tune in to your body**
Focus on relaxing each part of your body. Lie on your back or sit with your feet on the floor. Start at your toes and work your way up to your scalp. Notice where your muscles are tight and try to relax them.

**Be grateful**
Keep a gratitude journal to help you remember the good stuff. Celebrate your everyday accomplishments.

**Breathe deeply**
Deep breathing can reduce the effects of stress by slowing your heart rate and lowering your blood pressure. Take a five-minute break and focus on your breathing:

- Sit up straight with your eyes closed and a hand on your belly.
- Slowly inhale through your nose, feeling your breath as it fills your abdomen and chest.
- Reverse the process as you exhale through your mouth.

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Take a deep breath with myStrength
Your go-to for emotional well-being and peace of mind

Life gets busy. And sometimes it’s hard to keep up. That’s why your Employee Assistance Program EAP offers myStrength, a free online and mobile program that supports emotional health and wellness.

The program’s tools and resources are available to help you and your household members manage:

- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Chronic pain
- Depression
- Problems with sleep
- Stress

Think of myStrength as a private, 24/7 health club for your mind™. You can try out:

- Positivity-training tools.
- Inspirational videos, articles and quotes.
- A daily mood tracker.
- Step-by-step eLearning programs.

It’s time you felt your best again! Let myStrength help you get there. Go to your EAP website, anthemEAP.com, and enter SISC or call 800-999-7222 to learn more.